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Tuesday, September 29, 2009

Government issues 'urgent' warning to remove Toyota, Lexus floor mats

David Shepardson / Detroit News Washington Bureau

Washington -- Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today urged the owners of 3.9 million Toyota vehicles to immediately remove driver's side floor mats because of safety risks.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says that under certain conditions, the mats could cause the accelerator to stick in the full open position, which may result in high speeds and serious crashes.

"This is an urgent matter," LaHood said. "For everyone's sake, we strongly urge owners of these vehicles to remove mats or other obstacles that could lead to unintended acceleration."

Advertisement NHTSA said Toyota will soon recall some vehicles to address the problem. However, the safety agency warned owners to remove all driver's side floor mats from affected models immediately.

In September 2007, Toyota recalled an accessory all-weather floor mat sold for use in some 2007 and 2008 model year Lexus ES 350 and Toyota Camry vehicles because of similar problems.

NHTSA's announcement was triggered by reports of vehicles accelerating rapidly after release of the accelerator pedal. The incidents appear to be related to factors including unsecured mats, accelerator pedal configuration, and the unique steps needed to shut off the engines in some vehicles with keyless ignition.

"Consumers should take this seriously," said THTSA spokesman Rae Tyson.

The affected vehicles are:

2007-2010 Camry

2005-2010 Avalon

2004-2009 Prius



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2005-2010 Tacoma

2007-2010 Tundra

2007-2010 ES 350

2006-2010 IS 250 and IS350

For more information, consumers can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Hotline at (888) 327-4236 or the Toyota Experience Center at (800) 331-4331 or the Lexus Customer Assistance Center at (800) 255-3987. Information from Toyota is also posted at <http://www.toyota.com> and <http://www.lexus.com>.

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